

## Francisco Guterres Lu Olo for President

“I shall be a President of all and for all”

### *Media release*

**29 April 2007**

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## Stop manipulating Australian Army, Lu Olo tells Horta

Presidential candidate Francisco Guterres Lu’Olo today called on his opponent Jose Ramos Horta to stop trying to manipulate Australian troops in Timor-Leste (East Timor) for his own electoral advantage.

Lu’Olo said Horta had asked the International Stability Force (ISF) led by the Australia Defense Force (ADF) to call off its hunt for jail escapee Major Alfredo Reinado as part of a deal to secure Democratic Party votes for Horta.

“Horta publicly called for a halt to the ISF action against Reinado, so he could make an electoral deal with Reinado’s supporters in the Democratic Party”, said Lu’Olo. “This is a blatant attempt to manipulate the ISF in order to win votes.”

Lu’Olo continued: “Five Timorese died in the recent action to bring Reinado to justice. Australian soldiers put their lives at risk, and Timorese villagers in the areas where Reinado was hiding were placed under extreme duress.

“Now Horta has tried to call the action off, because Reinado’s capture will damage his chances of being elected President. This is totally unacceptable. As a former soldier myself, I can say with certainty that military actions should not be turned on and off to suit the whims of political leaders. The military must stand apart from politics, as required by our Constitution.”

Lu'Olo polled 28% of votes in the first round of the presidential election compared with Horta's 22%. Since no candidate achieved a majority, a second round vote will be held on 9 May. Votes from the third-placed candidate, Ferdinand Araujo Lasama of the Democratic Party, who polled 19%, will be crucial.

Lasama polled best in the western districts with active public support from Reinado. Lasama made the end of the operation against Reinado a condition of his agreement to support Horta, who made his public call for the hunt to be called off on 23 April, four days before he and Lasama signed an accord.

Brigadier Mal Rerden, Australian Commander of the ISF, provided indirect confirmation that Horta is playing politics with the Australian military. Last week Rerden acknowledged that Prime Minister Horta had told the public he wanted the ISF to stop its actions against Reinado. But Brigadier Rerden went on to deny there had been any official change of order. He told the Dili newspaper *Diario* on 25 April: "We haven't received any formal letter from the Government. If the Government thinks this is the best solution, then the Government and the ISF should discuss this."

Speaking today in Dili, Estanislau Da Silva, First Deputy Prime Minister responsible for coordination of the Government during the election campaign, confirmed Rerden's comments. "There has been no official change in the position of the Timor-Leste State and no recommendation has been received from the recent meeting of the High-Level Coordination Commission," said Da Silva. "Nor was any recommendation made arising from my meeting last Thursday, 26 April, with President Xanana Gusmao," he added.

The High Level Coordination Commission includes members of all three state institutions responsible for security, the President, the President of Parliament, and the Prime Minister, plus the First Vice Prime Minister and the UN Special Representative. The commanders of F-FDTL and the ISF are invited to these meetings.

“Horta has no power under the Constitution to act on such matters act unilaterally, not as Prime Minister, and not as President” said Lu’Olo. “Timor-Leste does not need a President who does not follow our Constitution. Security is the joint responsibility of all three organs of sovereignty. Horta should learn to show more respect for institutional channels before making public comments and commitments.”

The Australian Broadcasting Commission reported on 19 April that Leandro Isaac, the gun-toting rebel MP wanted in connection with his part in the last year’s violence, also met with Horta and asked him to call of the hunt for Reinado.

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